arming so ingrained in the Chinese countryside, that while paying lip service to Stalin, the Chinese Communists began to root their own party situation in the struggles against landlordism.

The fruit of all this was Chinese national independence and the troubles this has given the bourgeois powers of the West and the traditional Communist movement ever since. Without the Peasant Associations of China, which did not wait for their formation upon any Communist Party, all this could not have come about. The peasantry was announcing its entry into world politics. What may have happened to the Chinese Revolution after the consolidation of national independence is another question. But the achievement of national independence by a peasant army stands as an unquestionable fact by all willing to see.

The Indian national struggles after World War I followed something of the path whereby the Russian intelligentsia went to the peasant mass a century before. The Indian leader, Gandhi, made his name and fame by emulating the life of the peasant and engaging in all kinds of activities which would capture the peasants' imagination. Even those who called themselves Socialist in India, would, by the late 1930s, attempt to carry the whole peasantry with them in the effort to expel the British. Gandhi found a unifying tactic in the refusal to pay taxes, the peasants drove the struggle forward to include assaults on the landlords and moneylenders.

It was the intervention of war which moved the mass of the sharecroppers into the new struggle. The Japanese had invaded East Bengal, peasant committees began to administer affairs in the village and order justice there. Undoubtedly among the vital reasons that the British imperial authorities were prepared to leave the sub-continent that is India and Pakistan was the determination of the peasants to engage in uncompromisable struggles which no amount of diplomatic conferences with Indian Congress

Party leaders could in any way obviate. An organic social rupture was taking place in the length and breadth of Asia with the masses of peasants as its center and political independence as its viable result.

Perhaps there is no more singular illustration of the power of the peasantry than the world impact of Vietnamese peasants. The Vietnam peasants have in effect now mobilized whole sections of the American population and immobilized whole sectors of the American State. The Vietnamese as a people live in an industrially primitive civilization revolving around the cultivation of rice and the isolation of a village-based social structure. Yet they are facing the tremendous power of the United States with an energy, an endurance, and a heroism which cannot be exceeded. Napoleon, the greatest man of military affairs of the last centuries, faced it in Spain, he faced it in peasant Russia, he faced it in San Domingo. And today the Vietnam farmer shows us what the peasantry contains in itself.

Africa is in many ways key to the understanding of the role of the peasants in a world order in transition. The first new, independent state to be established on that continent was Ghana. The rise of Nkrumah in Ghana was ultimately determined by the peasant population in both political and social terms. While Nkrumah built a certain base for his political party in the major city of Accra, it was his tireless campaigning in the most outlying parts of the country among the rural people which produced the situation where the once all-powerful Colonial Office had to bring him out of jail to govern. No one else could govern the country. The population, ready, as Nkrumah has written, for anything, had seen to that.

The closeness of the city people to the peasantry in Ghana created the objective environment for the unification of the mass of the population, in both city and country. The market women who have for centuries united town and country through well-established

domestic marketing arrangements, the internal migration of people, and the sophistication of the coastal population, provided the bridge to the more distant rural population.

Nkrumah was able to respond to this readiness of the population, this closeness between town and country, and to express the aspirations of the total population. But more than this. He was the most vocal spokesman for African unity, for the notion of a Pan-African movement — the continental unity of peasant peoples.

We have now surveyed the role of the peasantry throughout the world, and have dealt with the reactionary prejudice that it will take hundreds of years before supposedly backward masses are brought up to the level of supposedly advanced peoples. Historical example after example show that the popular mass need only see the possibilities of a new society and the possibilities of assistance, not domination, of the advanced technical knowledge of the world: within fifteen or twenty years we can have a totally different world society.

Political independence is only, however, the first step in a long and difficult process. Now must come the working out of the difficult internal problems, the work relations, the connections between town and country, the utilization of popular resourcefulness. The mess left by the colonial powers, still not by any means totally out of the picture, must be cleared up.

The work and slim writings of a leader of the movement for independence in Tanganyika, D. K. Chisiza, offer the most concrete and penetrating analysis of the problem before Africa — and indeed the rest of the former colonial territories — that we know. Chisiza, unfortunately killed in an automobile accident when barely thirty, provides that kind of understanding that the architects of the new Africa must have.

The great strength of Chisiza's analysis lies in the fact that it begins and ends in the spirit of concern with the ninety per cent of the population which is rural and tribal. It is through this emphasis that he avoids the abstract treatment typical of old-fashioned autocracies and modern bureaucracies. While aware of the general problem of Africa in the midst of the cold war and the dangers of atomic annihilation, neo-colonialist economic control, and intervention by way of political intrigue and mercenary armies, Chisiza keeps his sights aimed at the transformation of the African tribalist into an industrial citizen. The uniqueness of his analysis and its general unavailability not only in Europe and America but in Africa as well, fully justifies an extensive quotation from his work in this document. The following is taken from his Realities of African Independence, published in 1961.

"Men flock in from rural areas to take up jobs in industrial enterprises. They are taught certain skills. But no sooner is the training over than they decide to return 'home'. Thus money, time and valuable effort will have been wasted on training men who will keep no track with industry. Worse still, when these men return to the industrial centers for another bout of employment, there is no arrangement to get them back to the jobs for which they were trained. The result is that they take up new jobs for which they have to receive new training. But before long the process is repeated all over again, the men turn their backs on industry and head for 'home'. Governments which have schemes for training foremen, charge hands, mechanics, artisans, and other skilled or semi-skilled workers face precisely the same, and no less a problem. This will probably prove to be one of the most intractable problems confronting African governments.

"The question must be asked: Why is it that Africans from rural areas find it difficult to sink roots in

industrial centers? Why won't they settle down to regular industrial employment? There are six answers to this question:

"(a) Because they feel lonely in urban areas. An African who has been brought up in an extended family system, under which family ties are very strong, cannot bear to be away from his family and relations for long. He is subjected to a loneliness which comes close to being a torture. Those who are brought up in a horizontal family system may not fully appreciate its intensity. But it is there — real, intense, merciless.

"(b) Because towns subject them to a sense of insecurity. Tribal life revolves around the institution of 'mutual aid and co-operation' from which people derive a tremendous sense of security. Like land, it is the equivalent of banks, savings, insurance policies, old age pensions, national assistance schemes, and social security. This 'mutual aid and co-operation' is non-existent in towns because urban communities are made up of people drawn not from one but from numerous tribes — conglomerations in which the institution cannot survive even if it were introduced.

"(c) Because they have obligations to their people 'back home' which can be fulfilled only in person. The people who come to work in industrial centers are at once children of their parents, fathers, husbands, brothers, and uncles. According to African custom, they must therefore look after and take over the responsibilities of their aging parents; they must periodically build houses for themselves and 'the old people'; they must initiate their male children in the customs and traditions of their tribes; and they must discharge their duties as husbands — all of which cannot be done from afar.

"(d) Because they find it trying to adjust themselves to the mode of life of urban areas. Town life bears little resemblance to the life they lead in rural

areas. In fact it is a wonder that they are able to put up with the complexities and vicissitudes of urban life for as long as they do. The gap between the two ways of life is so wide that one can cross it permanently only at the risk of protracted psychological discomfiture. It is a far cry from the world of the hoe, deer hunting, war dances, canoe regattas, and moral rectitude to that of the conveyor belt, tennis, tango, and promiscuity.

"(e) Because a good many of them feel that one cannot bring up children properly in towns. Juvenile delinquency, hooliganism, prostitution, marriage instability, greed, and individualism which characterize life in urban areas are revolting to rural peoples. That is why those of them who are forced by circumstances to ask their wives to join them in towns, send their children 'back home' to be brought up in the traditional way.

"(f) Because their goals are realized quickly. Men who come to towns have definite goals in mind. It may be the purchase of a sewing machine, a plough, a bicycle, clothes, or kitchen utensils. They may be trying to raise money to enable them to build brick houses or to settle cases or to pay taxes. As soon as the goals are achieved it is deemed time to put odds and ends together and head for home.

"All these reasons combine to compel the rural African to return to the rural areas 'where men are men and women are proud of them'." (Chisiza, Realities of African Independence, Page 21)

What makes these detailed analyses exemplary in their perceptiveness is that they correspond to the problems of peoples trying to make their way everywhere. From the original entry of the Russian peasantry onto the forefront of political experience to the emergence of modern Africa, the overriding central issue has been the division between town and countryside, between ever-centralizing bureaucrats and the resourcefulness of local initiative.

Here is this problem in the Russian Revolution at the eve of the long dark night of its deterioration and degeneration. Lenin is speaking.

"Under certain conditions the exemplary organization of local work, even on a small scale, is of far greater national importance than many branches of central state work. And these are precisely the conditions we are in at the present moment in regard to peasant farming in general, and in regard to the exchange of surplus products of agriculture for the manufacture of industry in particular. Exemplary organization in this respect, even in a single vlost, is of far greater national importance than the 'exemplary' improvement of the central apparatus of any People's Commissariat; for our central apparatus has been built up during the past three and a half years to such an extent, we cannot improve it quickly to any extent, we do not know how to do it. Assistance in the more radical improvement of it, a new flow of fresh forces, assistance in the successful struggle against bureaucracy, in the struggle to overcome this harmful inertness, must come from the localities, from the lower ranks, with the exemplary organization of a small 'whole', precisely a 'whole', that is, not one farm, not one branch of the economy, not one enterprise, but the sum total of economic relations, the sum total of economic exchange, even if only in a small locality.

"Those of us who are doomed to remain on work at the center will continue the task of improving the apparatus and purging it of bureaucracy, even if in modest and immediately achievable dimensions. But the greatest assistance in this task is coming, and will come, from the localities." (Selected Works, Volume 9, Page 191. Emphasis in the original.)

That phrase, "Those of us who are doomed to remain on work at the center", is the ultimate wisdom, the need, the overwhelming desire of the greatest student of human affairs that any government has

every known. His mastery of philosophy, political economy, and politics could find its climax and fruition only in going to work among the peasants in a Russian village.

THE UNITED STATES AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

What has happened in relations between Russia and the United States over the last dozen years is of primary significance for us. American power has accommodated itself to Russian power because the threat of working-class revolution against Stalinist power is more frightening than the competition with modern Russia. While the conflict has not ceased, it has been carefully controlled. This new stage in the relationship was marked by the October of 1956, the Hungarian Revolution. This was a revolution of the entire Hungarian population, led by the working class, against Russian occupation and the Communist Party dictatorship. In the past in the cold war between America and Russia, the American government responded quickly and forcefully to what it considered the challenge of "international communism". But it met the rising of the Hungarian working class in the face of tremendous military odds with the insistence that the repression of Hungary was an internal matter of the "Warsaw Pact" signatories. America acquiesced in the slaughter of the Hungarian proletarian revolution, a revolution that marked the furthest stage of the revolutionary development of the modern working class. In it the working class demonstrated that it could dispense with political parties and rely solely on the power of its direct organization in workers' councils at the point of production. This workers' power was too great a threat to American capitalism; American capitalism did not mind that Russian tanks defeated it.

Today the American and Russian working classes

stand as the heirs of the Hungarian workers of 1956. Therefore, only an analysis of the interpenetration of Russian and American working classes can allow us to see the way out of the tensions that portend the making of World War III.

In 1917 the largest and most modern factory in the world was the Putilov works in Saint Petersburg. The social organization to correspond to that, however, was not in Russia at all. It was at the plant of the Ford Motor Company in Highland Park, Michigan. The Russian workers overthrew czarism, and then the capitalist government of Kerensky, in order to take possession of the Putilov works and all the rest of Russian industry. But the social order which they were revolting against, and which they were to face again in another form, had reached its highest development at Ford.

Ford had introduced the assembly line to raise labor productivity to new heights. But the assembly line raised more than productivity. It raised the alienation and fragmentation of workers to new heights. And so Ford introduced a new social organization to correspond to the technical organization of the assembly line. This was the Ford Service Department, which organized a totalitarian control over the lives of Ford workers, at work and at home, which was to become notorious for its viciousness, for its corruption, and for its pervasiveness. Combined with the ultimate in alienation and control was — the Five Dollar Day. This was evidence right at the start of a new stage of capitalist production that the intensification of exploitation was no longer to be synonymous with low wages.

What the Ford system was, was the embryonic form, limited to one company and one community, of fascism or totalitarianism. When the Ford system of production became the universal one in all industrial nations, the attempt to impose the Ford social system also became universal. It was successful in Italy. It

was successful in Germany. And it was the system which Stalin turned to in order to destroy the conquests of 1917 and to industrialize Russia at the expense of the Russian workers. Harry Bennett's Service Department on the grand scale — the GPU, organizer of purges, organizer of assassinations, organizer of slave labor camps.

In one sense, the fact that the peak of capitalist social organization had been reached in the United States and not in Russia was a sign of the weakness of the Russian working class. Although the Putilov works was the largest in the world and contained under its roof the largest concentration of workers ever assembled until that time, Russian industry as a whole was small and weak. And the Russian working class was small and weak. Not, of course, in relation to czarism, but in relation to the needs of a modern industrial civilization.

The American working class, despite the greater intensity of its exploitation in 1917 and in the years that followed, proved powerful enough to prevent the imposition of the Ford social system, that is, fascism, on the nation as a whole. The attempts to impose totalitarian order and regimentation on the nation, especially after the explosions of the depression days, were continuous. Fascist organizations were formed and reached considerable strength in some instances. And the interest in promoting an imposed social peace on the nation through totalitarian instruments reached into the New Deal cabinet of Franklin Roosevelt. But the outbursts, the strikes, the sitdowns, the political organization proved stronger than the counter-revolution and what emerged was Welfare State Capitalism instead of Totalitarian State Capitalism.

Now, after 50 years, we have come full circle and Russian and American workers once again share a fundamentally similar situation. In the Soviet Union it took the organization of labor itself, the Communist

Party, to impose the brutal discipline required by the needs of capital. The organization of labor transformed into its opposite, the instrument of capitalist discipline in production. In the United States too, although in more moderate form, the old social order proved inadequate to control and regiment the working class and one of the consequences of Welfare State Capitalism is that that task is more and more assumed by the organizations of labor, the unions. (In England the process is even more visible in the Labour Party.) Here, too, the organization of labor is transformed into its opposite, the instrument of capitalist discipline in production. And old Henry Fold knew what he was doing; his pattern is imitated to this day. He knew that he had to combine the carrot with the stick, the Five Dollar Day with the Service Department. So the union contracts of today combine the high wages and fringe benefits with the increase of discipline and intensification of the speed-up.

In 1917 it was still possible for different parts of the world to travel different roads. Today that is no longer true. What Russian workers will find it necessary to do, or what American workers will find it necessary to do, will also be done by their fellow workers on the other side of the world.

The Russian working class traveled a rocky and tortuous road from 1917 to 1967. In 1917 the Russian workers were unable to end the contradiction between economics and politics. They mastered politics and formed Soviets. But they did not succeed in mastering economics. They proved too small, too backward, too isolated to manage production. As a result they were driven back. The battles of the Civil War took a tremendous toll. Thousands of the workers who had made the Revolution fell in battle. The physical plant of Russian industry deteriorated with the result that the working class itself was scattered with an additional loss of productive skills. Skilled workers unable to work at their trade because of lack of equipment or

of materials drifted into black market trade or back to the farm or accepted unskilled work. The final blow was the Stalinist counter-revolution which annihilated the rank and file militants, the factory leaders, the worker-Bolsheviks.

In 1917 the Russian workers put an end to Russian feudalism. A decade later (1928) Stalin introduced the first Five Year Plan to impose a capitalist discipline on the workers. But it was an almost new working class, driven from the farms through the forced collectivization of agriculture which was intended both to supply the workers and to feed them. In 1928 the aim was the largest possible mass of labor through the subordination of the workers to the specialists in general. By 1931 industrialization had reached the point where exploitation could be intensified by increasing the pay of individuals through the institution of the piecework system. By 1935 this is developed into fully blown Stakhanovism, the piece worker as individual hero, the competition between workers. In this brutal way was industrialization introduced to state capitalist Russia and illiterate peasants transformed into disciplined workers. In 1936 the new Stalinist Constitution codified the new system and established the "intelligentsia"; that is, the experts, the party leaders, the managers as the new capitalist class.

The power of the small Russian working class of 1917, its overthrow of czarism and its control of the state, called forth the absolute extreme of totalitarian terror to overthrow it and then to dominate and discipline the new Russian working class. By the time of World War II, Russian industrialization had reached the point where the machinery itself could begin to discipline and organize the workers. Piecework becomes more systematized in the form of competition between factories.

The major turning point is 1943. This is the year of the conversion to the conveyor belt system. It cor-

responds to the theoretical admission, in Leontier's "Political Economy in the Soviet Union", that the law of value operates in the Soviet Union. But the conveyor-belt system indicates more than a technical level of sophistication. It indicates that a modern industrial proletariat has been formed, far in advance of the Russian workers of 1917. And the class struggle begins to develop as the workers attempt to organize their resistance to the intense exploitation. It begins in Vorkuta and the slave labor camps before the death of Stalin, and then spreads to all of Russia. Stalin's death and the relaxation of the oppression conceals the fact that the change in rulers did not cause the thaw but merely corresponded to the pressures of the workers.

At the Twentieth Congress of the Russian Communist Party in 1956, in a speech to which no one paid any attention because it was public (unlike the secret speech denouncing Stalin), Khrushchev points out that "there is a great deal of disorder and confusion in the system of wages and rate-fixing.... Cases of wage leveling are not uncommon. On the other hand, payment for the same type of work sometimes differs between various bodies, and even within a single body. Alongside the low-paid workers there exists a category of workers, a small one it is true, in whose wages unjustified excesses are tolerated."

What this means, of course, is that the Russian workers have succeeded in establishing the informal shop-floor organizations of struggle, known in all industrial countries. They have been able to make a mockery of the national plan and to force adjustments in wages (and, of necessity, working conditions) on a shop or department basis.

The stage that the modern industrial proletariat of a totalitarian state capitalist nation has reached was indicated negatively by Khrushchev. It was indicated positively by the Hungarian Revolution, where the opposition between economics and politics was finally

overcome. Hungary shows where the Russian working class has in fact reached, able to manage society both politically and economically.

In the United States the fantastic growth of the chemical industry and the development of the electric motor made possible the introduction of the continuous assembly line. Huge complexes such as the Ford plant were made possible by the new source of power which was portable within the plant and freed production from the need to be close to water power. They were aided, in the early stages of the chemical industry, by the finer grades of steel and other products made possible by the application of electricity and chemistry to machine production.

The result in the United States was a tremendous expansion of the working class, aided by World War I, and almost immediately the explosion of the class struggle. The period of the Twenties, the so-called prosperity years, begins with the great steel strike of 1919 and the Seattle General Strike, and ends in the Great Depression. It is a period, not of class peace, but of class war. But with the crushing of the steel strike the state and all the instruments of political power are clearly seen as the direct servant of capital. The workers, adept at using their economic power, find themselves unmercifully beaten back by the political (and military) power arrayed against them. In the United States, as in Russia, the workers are taking the needed time to learn about themselves, about the new forms of production, about the forms of organization adequate for their situation.

With the Great Depression this bursts forth in the formation of the CIO and the introduction of the sit-down strike. In the sit-down, the workers take their first long step toward control of production and, thereby, the elimination of the contradiction between economics and politics as it confronted the American working class. In their origin as spontaneous out-

bursts started without the approval and against the wishes of the leaders of the new unions, the sit-downs already foretell the fundamental split between workers and union leaders that is the hallmark of the labor movement today. And just as the workers' revolution of 1917 brought forth totalitarian state capitalism to suppress it, so the workers' revolt of the 1930s also brought forth the massive intervention of the state in the form of Welfare State Capitalism to suppress it. All of the labor and social reforms of the New Deal were designed to provide orderly bargaining through representatives supervised by the state and to put an end to workers' representing themselves in sit-downs and wildcats. The massive uprising of the 1930s had finally broken through the separation of economics and politics, but because it was not complete, because it ended in unions instead of control, the workers were able to transform American politics but not to control it.

The period of World War II is the period of the codification of the social legislation of the New Deal. The fusion between unions and government is made complete. The workers make one last attempt to break it in the immediate postwar years, and when the first round of postwar strikes has only limited success (winning the sliding scale of wages in the auto industry) both sides in the conflict move in new directions. American industry in the early Fifties embarks on a massive program of automation to free itself from the restrictions imposed on it by the workers (and made possible by the technological advances during the war in military products). The workers begin the necessary reorganization to correspond to the new form of production. In 1955 they indicate what that new form is. In the massive wildcats against a union settlement in auto, the workers put forward their own "specific local grievances" which, in their totality, show the desire of workers

to control production and demonstrate their total separation from the union. No longer will the union be the instrument to make significant social gains. Quite the contrary, through the union-company contract, the union becomes the instrument of capital, maintaining discipline in production, maintaining labor peace.

In the United States, by a different road and in modified form, the labor organization (the Union) becomes the organizer of production corresponding to Russian State Capitalism under which the labor organization (the Communist Party) becomes the organizer of production. The American working class too, although coming by a different road, has also reached the point where it is demonstrating its capacity to govern production and society in its own name. The Hungarian Revolution becomes the hallmark not only of the Russian working class, but of the workers of any industrialized country, above all, of the United States.

In 1917 the Russian workers demonstrated mastery over politics but failed in economics. The American workers were the most advanced economically but were beaten down politically. Fifty years later, both have achieved the maturity, the organization, the freedom from bureaucratic domination to make the final leap, the socialist revolution.

George Jackson

The previous analysis and the negation of the black struggles in Africa should show the method that is being used in this essay. It would be quite stupid, if not ridiculous, to attempt to give some sort of brief or concentrated account of black struggles in the United States. To do that properly would require a book or a series of lectures. Instead I shall continue, in fact intensify, the method that I have been raising so far. The most important name in the history of black struggles in the world at large or in the United States is Dr. W. E. B. DuBois. All thinking about black struggles today and some years past originates from him. Here, however, I have to take one single quotation from his work. In Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1888, Dr. DuBois sums up his future of black struggles in the world at large. He concludes with a picture of the frustration suffered by blacks in the United States. He writes on Page 703:

> Such mental frustration cannot indefinitely continue. Some day it may burst in fire and blood. Who will be to blame ? And where the greater cost ? Black folk, after all, have little to lose, but Civilization has all. This the American black man knows: His fight here is a fight to the finish. Either he dies or he wins. If he wins it will be by no subterfuge or evasion of amalgamation. He will enter modern civilization here in America as a

> black man on terms of perfect and unlimited equality with any white man, or he will enter not at all. Either extermination root and branch, or absolute equality. There can be no compromise. This is the last great battle of the West.

That is where in 1971 we have to begin. In 1938 I visited the United States, and by 1948, speaking on the platform of the Socialist Workers Party (Trotskyism, which I left three years afterward), I introduced a resolution on the Negro question. In the course of it I said as follows:

> We can compare what we have to say that is new by comparing it to previous positions on the Negro question in the Socialist movement. The proletariat, as we know, must lead the struggles of all the oppressed and all those who are persecuted by capitalism. But this has been interpreted in the past and by some very good socialists too — in the following sense: The independent struggles of the Negro people have not got much more than an episodic value, and as a matter of fact, can constitute a great danger not only to the Negroes themselves, but to the organized labor movement. The real leadership of the Negro struggle must rest in the hands of organized labor and of the Marxist party. Without that the Negro struggle is not only weak, but is likely to cause difficulties for the Negroes and dangers to organized labor. This, as I say, has been the position held by many socialists in the past. Some great socialists in the United States have been associated with this attitude.

> We on the other hand say something entirely different. We say, number one, that the Negro struggle, the independent Negro struggle, has a vitality and a validity of its own: that it has deep historic roots in the past of America and in present struggles; it has an organic political perspective, along which it is traveling, to one degree or another, and everything shows that at the present time it is traveling with great speed and vigor. We say, number two, that this independent Negro movement is able to intervene with terrific force upon the general social and political life of the nation, despite the fact that it is waged under the banner of democratic rights, and is not led necessarily either by the organized labor movement or the Marxist party. We say, number three, and this is the most important, that it is able to exercise a powerful influence upon the revolutionary proletariat, that it has got a great contribution to make to the development of the proletariat in the United States, and that is in itself a constituent part of the struggle for socialism.

The reader will have to note that not only was the black question given an independent role with its own role and its own leadership, he must note also the great step forward that was made in Section 3. Previous to 1948 the whole Marxist movement, including myself, had always thought that on the whole and also in particular it was the proletariat, the Marxist party which had to educate all the elements of society on the fundamental reality of political struggle for socialism. A careful reading of that Section 3 will show that a sharp break was made with this traditional

policy. There it was made quite clear that the black struggles in the United States would be the education of the whole society in the realities of contemporary politics. That is precisely what is happening today and the best proof I can give of it are two quotations from the letters of a young man, George Jackson, published under the title Soledad Brother. Jackson was in prison at the age of 18 and was shot and killed in the prison at the age of 28. Of the ten years that he spent in prison, seven were spent in solitary confinement. The letters are in my opinion the most remarkable political documents that have appeared inside or outside the United States since the death of Lenin. Here is the first quotation:

> There is an element of cowardice, great ignorance, and perhaps even treachery in blacks of his general type. And I agree with Eldridge and Malcolm, we are not protecting unity when we refrain from attacking them. Actually it's the reverse that's true. We can never have unity as long as we have these idiots among us to confuse and frighten the people. It's not possible for anyone to still think that Western mechanized warfare is absolute, not after the experiences of the Third World since World War II. The French had tanks in Algeria, the US had them in Cuba. Everything, I mean every trick and gadget in the manual of Western arms has been thrown at the VC, and they have thrown them back, twisted and ruined; and they have written books and pamphlets telling us how we could do the same. It's obvious that fighting ultimately depends on men, not gadgets. So I must conclude that those who stand between us and the pigs, who protect the marketplace, are either cowards or traitors. Probably both....

The second quotation explains and historically places the first. Jackson claims that all the prisoners in his prison who are specially confined and specially punished think exactly as he does. He says that words like "honkey", a word that is commonplace for abuse of white people by black revolutionaries, these young men never used. Here is what Jackson says of them:

> ....All of these are beautiful brothers, ones who have stepped across the line into the position from which there can be no retreat. All are fully committed. They are the most desperate and dauntless of our kind. I love them. They are men and they do not fight with their mouths. They've brought them here from prisons all over the state to be warehoused or murdered, whichever is more expedient. That Brother Edwards who was murdered in that week in January told his lawyer that he would never get out of prison alive. He was at the time of that statement on Maximum Row, Death Row, Soledad, California. He was 21 years old. We have made it a point to never exchange words with these people. But they never relent. Angela, there are some people who will never learn new responses. They will carry what they incorporated into their characters at early youth to the grave. Some can never be educated. As a historian, you know how long and how fervently we've appealed to these people to take some of the murder out of their system, their economics, their propaganda; and as an intelligent observer you must see how our appeals were received. We've wasted many generations and oceans of blood trying to civilize these elements over here. It cannot be done in the manner in which we have attempted it in the past. Dialectics, understanding, love, passive resistance — they

won't work on an atavistic, maniacal, gory pig. It's going to grow much worse for the black male than it already is — much much worse. We are going to have to be the vanguard, catalyst, in any meaningful change.

It is quite obvious that where DuBois and myself were observing a situation, taking part, organizationally in our various ways, but guided by theoretical, that is to say intellectual development, the generation to which Jackson belonged has arrived at the profound conclusion that the only way of life possible to them is the complete intellectual, physical, moral commitment to the revolutionary struggle against capitalism. They are a stage beyond all historical and theoretical writing, and I add here an opinion that in my travels about the United States I have met or been aware of many thousands of young black people who could not express themselves in this manner, for Jackson is a born writer. But that is how they think, those are the principles on which they act, and as blacks they are not alone. It would take too much to show that their attitude is not confined to blackness, but that for the time being is enough. The reader of this must now go and for himself read all about Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Angela Davis, Huey Newton, the Black Panther Party, and the whole list of other names and persons who fill the political life of the United States today. But unless he has some clear grasp of the historical development which I have outlined he will not only be wasting his time but corrupting his understanding of what is taking place in the United States today.

C.L.R. James,III

The Way Out--

World Revolution

This is an analysis.

Three things are requisite for Marxists to understand:

The national state must be destroyed, and the only way in which that can be done is the break-up of all bourgeois institutions and their replacement by socialist institutions.

The French Revolution of 1968 showed that the mass of the population was ready to take over society and to form new institutions. The late De Gaulle recognized that, and that was the basis of his insistence on "participation". The decay of France's bourgeois institutions was proved not only by the tremendous outburst of the great body of the nation — an outburst comprehensive as no previous revolutionary outburst had been, but also by the fact that the bourgeoisie and the middle classes were quite powerless before the strength and the desire to break up the old state. They had very little to say, and, so far as could have been judged, were paralyzed by the decay and rottenness of the capitalistic regime and the power and range of the revolt against it.

The first concrete enemy is the bourgeois national state. It is absolutely impossible for a national state of any kind at this stage of the Twentieth Century to develop and even to maintain itself even the most revolutionary and proletarian of governments. Therefore Marxists must know and seek every possible

means of making it clear that the national quality of the state must be destroyed; that is to say, the revolution has got to be an international socialist revolution: to put it crudely: appeal to masses of the people in all countries to make their own, the fate of World Revolution. This appeal is not now being made by any section of revolutionary leadership, the world over. The national state cannot function today. And not to know that, not to make that clear means the destruction of the revolution.

The safety of any revolution, its completion, its ability to fight against the enormous pressures which will be placed upon it, the questions of food, finance, and possible military intervention of the counter-revolution of a certain kind, these are not questions removed from the day-to-day struggle. From the very beginning it has to be made clear that the economic relations, political relations, the safeguarding of any revolution against daily and political life now depends on the transformation of the bourgeois institutions into socialist institutions, the unleashing of the strength of the working class first of all. We do not make the revolution to achieve the socialist society. The socialist society makes the revolution. Today there is no period of transition from one regime to another. The establishment of the socialist regime, the power of the working class and those substantial elements in the nation who are ready to go with it, that is not something which one must look for to be achieved in the future. That is absolutely necessary now, not only for the socialist society but to maintain the ordinary necessities of life and to defend the elementary rights of all society.

What are the new socialist institutions ? Marxists do not know, nobody knows. The working class and the general mass of the population are creating them in action. Marxists are to be aware of that and to let the working class know that they alone can create the new institutions.

The highest revolutionary peak so far reached is the instinctive action of the working class in the Hungarian Revolution.

Vanguard Party, Social Democratic Party, Trade Union Leadership, all are bourgeois institutions. The revolution which was begun in France of 1968 and which we shall see continuing everywhere over the next period will save itself delay and temporary defeats if only from the very beginning it recognizes that all negotiations and arrangements about wages or anything else that the revolution has to undertake are to be undertaken by its own independent organizations. It may take some time before the 1968 French Revolution establishes this. But outside of France we can learn this. None of the regular institutions must be allowed to enter into negotiations on behalf of any section of the revolution. Over the next period new upheavals must understand this from the very beginning. Students will represent students and discuss with university staffs. Workers will represent workers, peasants will represent peasants, blacks will represent blacks, women will represent women. No kind of established organization which has been functioning in the bourgeois regime is to be accepted as a representative. This will be difficult to establish, particularly in regard to the trade union leadership especially where it represents a majority of the organized workers. But that for the revolution of 1968 was the key point at issue. No question of anarchism arises here. The very structure of modern society prepares the working-class and sections of society to undertake immediately the creation of socialist institutions.

We must point out the stages of the Marxist movement. Marx put forward the basic ideas in the Communist Manifesto after profound studies in philosophy, and revolutionary history, and the watching of a movement of the workers in some insignificant part of France. Then followed the Commune in 1871. It

was the Commune in 1871 which gave to Lenin and the Bolsheviks indications as to be able to understand what took place in 1905. 1905 was the dress rehearsal for 1917. We have to be able first for our own benefit to understand what has taken place between 1917 and 1968. We need not go preaching this to the working class, but Marxists have to be quite clear as to the stage of development so as to be able to recognize, welcome, and intensify the advances that are taking place instinctively in the nation and in the world at large. This work has to be done. The greatest mistake would be not to do it at all. Equally mischievous would be the idea that it can be done apart from the concrete struggles that are taking place everywhere. The World Revolution has entered in what could be a decisive and final stage.

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James O'Brien, Co-editor

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Marxism in the U.S.:

39 Propositions

By PAUL BUHLE

Introduction

The following propositions are offered as a discussion document, and as an abstract measurement of some of the distance Radical America has traveled in speaking to the most pressing theoretical problems of the Left. It is not, properly considered, a collective statement. Yet the efforts through RA to uncover the reality of American radicalism, the history of the working class, the direction of existent Marxism, and the unique features of modern culture have been inseparable from the individual searches of all the editors, and most especially from mine. Perhaps no other Marxist journal in the history of the American Left has been so undefined at its outset, and has so completely reflected in its growth and elaboration the development of its editors and writers.

No claim is made to precision or finality. These were first set down over the summer because the crumbling of the New Left has created a vacuum of theoretical discussion at a time when radical possibilities within the society are greater than at any time in a generation; and because in moving from Madison to Boston, RA is itself nearing its most important transition. In readapting ourselves to the new conditions, we have not simply repudiated or forgotten our past. Rather, we have begun to see that the

Movement as it was understood has been dialectically transcended and overcome; and that the next stage, whatever it brings, will mark a transformation of us all. The sense of totality that dances before our eyes has, with a few outstanding exceptions, not been even remotely reflected in the writings of our generation of revolutionaries. Toward the explication of that sense, this document is intended as a modest contribution.

> The evolution of society constantly heightens the tension between the partial aspects and the whole. Just because the inherent meaning of reality shines forth with an ever more resplendent light, the meaning of the process is embedded ever more deeply in day-to-day events, the totality permeates the spatio-temporal character of phenomena. (George Lukacs, History and Class-Consciousness)

1

A century since the first wide-scale attempts at working-class self-organization and the introduction of the Marxian critique in the United States, there is today no radical social movement of any importance. The most basic assumption upon which Socialism and Communism rested as movements — the centrality of a materially deprived white male industrial proletariat aided by other forces of essentially secondary importance — has been thoroughly discredited, but nowhere replaced with any new, comprehensive notion. Politically, we find on the one side the parties of the Left's past, living on ideological notions and exerting a certain deadening pressure upon social theory and practice, but finally irrelevant to the mass disaffection and motion opening up in front of

us; on the other, the fragments of a Movement which collapsed without becoming part of a new revolutionary force or even understanding in world forces the meaning of its own demise. Clearly enough, the basic sources of our situation have not been understood and confronted.

2

Nowhere has capitalism so fully and "Shamelessly" (Marx) developed as in the United States. Consequently, Marxist theory cannot ascribe the apparent weakness of the revolutionary forces to some exceptional circumstances, but must regard their problems as basic to the universal conditions of modern class society. The mutilated forms of radical theory and practice cannot be attributed to "revisions" and betrayals, but must be sought in the heart of Capitalist social and economic development. Least hampered by the constrictions of earlier societies, American Capitalism has naturally moved most rapidly toward the exhaustion of its absolute possibilities; in its self-destruction, we may trace the exhaustion of older forms of popular resistance and the rise of a new, total revolutionary movement.

3

Nowhere did Western exploitation of the Third World find so direct and mutually pervasive social relations as with American society's black legion of forced labor. Here a slice of "backward" humanity provided a single nation with the impetus for a vast industrial economy, and precipitated the first great war of modern times (known with ironic blandness as "the Civil War"), rising within the struggle as a central force in preserving the society. Nowhere did the destruction of pre-industrial forms of labor fall so clearly upon woman's social relationships and di-

vide her in a specifically modern sense from a definition of herself as a subject of history. Here, women gained exceptional power in colonial society only to have opportunities wrenched from their daughters as industrialization proceeded and the nuclear family solidified; here, vast numbers of women, eyes opened by the looseness of class relations, could see the proximity of real freedom while denied its substance. Nowhere finally did a society so create a sense of individual liberty and self-determination in the "ordinary" (white male) citizen, imbuing in so many millions the self-conscious privilege of governing their own fate; nowhere has this individualistic freedom been so used to justify social reaction in the Twentieth Century.

Weaknesses for the development of a traditional class movement, these circumstances in American society are in general preconditions for the emergence of human transformation which marks the next phase of class development and underlies the revolutionary possibilities of our time: In casting forth the Third World member, the woman, and the individual citizen as central to a social order, American society created them as universal categories even while denying the possibility of their unity in an old-style class movement. In the realization of these categories the road opens for the creation of the first truly modern working class and for the possibility of freedom for all.

4

Nowhere did the thirst for development inherent in Capitalism imbibe so many millions of immigrants of so many cultures: Here was the closest national approximation to the configuration of the world labor movement compressed into one struggle. Historically cultural and ethnic divisions interlinked with racial and sexual differences to obstruct systematic class

consciousness. The advanced forms of class exploitation pioneered by American Capitalism forced the gradual liquidation of cultural differences at the point of production — but not nearly so fast in the social-cultural milieu of home, neighborhood, and political citizenship; at the same time, an advanced working class was forced by the increasing pace of exploitation toward the most monumental day-by-day shop resistance. Nowhere, consequently, has a modern working class exhibited such an active record of industrial militancy (measured in sheer numbers of working hours lost and in violence in factory activity) and such indifference to political forms reflecting class self-consciousness.

5

Already at the outset of the present century, the dynamics of a modern, proletarian revolutionary movement became clear to those who could perceive the obsolescence of barricades in an age of mass industrial power. The development of mass production in a variety of industries brought together a workforce from the rural life of America and Europe, only instinctively aware of the meaning of its new existence at the center of modern society. Against the most brutalizing and deprived conditions, it revolted instinctively, as a mass, through strikes for rudimentary improvements. The Industrial Workers of the World and its allies recognized in this crude force — foreshadowed by the Pullman Strike of 1894 and expressed in full form last in the mass strikes of 1919 — the essence of Socialism: the development of working-class confidence and self-governmental ability on the shop floor, leading to workers' councils which would replace political government at the moment of revolution.

6

The American Socialist movement only partially reflected these possibilities. The Party grew up small and late by European standards, combining a Nineteenth Century tradition of reform eclectically into a self-styled "Marxist" class movement. Reflecting the transformation of American society, it espoused both the aspirations of the fading middle-class and skilled workers to uphold social and ethical standards against monopolism; and the desire for workers' power by a thin stratum of politicized workers. Unable to choose between past and present, it was transformed by World War I, which eroded its old bases and replaced them with the representatives of the unskilled workers. But as a Party it could go no further: repressed, divided, it cracked in 1919 and remained behind.

7

There were no Soviets in the United States, not because America lacked a Lenin but because Capitalism in the United States was becoming the strongest link in the chain of world Capitalist domination. While the War left European Capital prostrate, American Capital grew into a vast empire of commercial penetration. Its work force emerged with its principal sectors solidified against each other: skilled workers whose unions were temporarily strengthened by government patronage in wartime; unskilled workers (including the vast bulk of women and black voters) violently repressed in their organizing efforts; and the advanced guard of a new sector of white-collar employees, growing with industrial specialization and as a sector clinging to the coattails of the big bourgeoisie.

8

The mass upsurge of labor's foreign-speaking, unorganized sector was turned back: the pivotal steel strike in 1919 and the accompanying mass strikes throughout industry showed the impossibility of successful organization for the masses of workers along American Federation of Labor craft lines, as the failure of the IWW to maintain its victories earlier had shown the weakness of overt revolutionary unionism.

With the division and retreat of the working class, the first Moment of Marxism in the United States had passed. In its scope had been realized the first glimmerings of class self-confidence, and the first recognition by Marxists of the significance of those glimmerings. But theorists and activists who had seen in this mass action by unorganized workers a mirror to the Soviets were premature; and Marxism as a theory of working class self-activity faded into Communist (or decadent Socialist) political Ideology.

9

As radicalism faltered, the development of social relations within modern Capitalism revealed the incomplete nature of the class movement. In the generation after 1900, a social feminism grew within the ranks of middle- and upper-middle class women, congealed politically in and around the radical wings of the Suffragist and Socialist movements. Uncertain of its aims, unaware of its potential strength in the working class, the vague movement lost inertia after the achievement of suffrage and faded into a multitude of personal solutions to a social problem (the "new sexuality" of relaxed repression, the new individual opportunities for economic advancement, and the "liberation" of the middle-class home). Simul-

taneously, a vast movement of blacks proceeded to fill wartime occupations in the North, transforming the situation of millions of black workers and their families. The new possibilities of urban life were first shown in the ideologically confused but enormously powerful force: the response to the movement of Marcus Garvey, revealing in spite of its limitations the reservoir of black social and cultural energy striving toward political expression.

10

In the 1920s and early 1930s, industrial workers in technically-advanced plants experienced the transformation of mass production. With the refinement of corporate-directed reorganization came the time-and-motion studies and the line of continuous production. In its demands for labor power, this new form of production created an industrial working class out of the scattered skilled and unskilled sectors; at the same time, it threatened that new class with a tyranny of wage slavery systematized as never before. The response of the class in the first instance was a series of guerrilla actions, local in range and essentially unplanned; the result in the last instance was the formation of the CIO. This was the nearest American counterpart to the European mass party, the proletariat's means of knowing itself and the world.

11

Yet the CIO's organizational strength was already the working class's weakness. Although workers struggled with relative success over the nature of the work process itself, the limitations upon the arbitrary power of Capital to humiliate and degrade the worker also presupposed an internal self-limitation — symbolized and partially embodied in the contract — upon

the free activity of casual strikes and upon direct striving toward the total reorganization of industry. Through the bureaucratization of a growing labor movement and the new conditions of wartime production, the CIO unions themselves became the key agents of industrial discipline. Thus the fulfillment of the IWW's promise was also a reversal, not a declared war on the bourgeoisie carried to a higher stage but a declared peace at uppermost union levels disguising a continuing, local pattern of struggles beneath. The loss of organizing inertia, the internal struggles leading to the "purge" of Red unions and officials, the decline of the official labor movement to the point of no return — all these were foreshadowed in the contradiction between the violent self-expression of the sit-down strikes and the power of hierarchies in labor and government to maneuver the terms of the outcome.

12

The Communist movement, destroyer and replacement of Socialism, reflected the limitations of working-class international activity in the First Moment, and the consequent (and exaggerated) limitations of the Marxist political movements. Retreating first to the defense of the increasingly Stalinized USSR, the Marxist Parties at last fell into the arms of the bourgeoisie in the search for aid against Fascism. The American Third International Party, like the Socialist Party, reflected most of all a sector of the working class on the road to cultural assimilation. Tactically advanced through organizational links within unions, the Party was strategically retrograde relative to the Left Socialists of the previous generation: for Communist leadership the proletariat was only a mechanism for the capture of the State and its replacement by a hierarchy exclusively Communist.

Thus at its upper levels, the Communist movement was symmetrical with the CIO bureaucracy since their mentalities in interpreting the "needs" of workers from above were altogether similar. More naively Stalinist than its sister parties, American Communism moved almost innocently toward acceptance of bourgeois democratic ideals of government reforms and "democratic" warmaking, stultification of class initiatives at decisive points through influence over union tactics, and finally, self-destruction through obeisance to the changing needs of Soviet national defense.

13

After a brief upsurge following World War II, the American working class fell into retreat: a relation between living cost and wages was gained at the expense of decreased control at the point of production. This compromise had two major, inseparable aspects: first the failure of labor to overcome or even successfully resist the new forms of "discipline" supported by union bureaucracy; and second, the development of Imperialism in providing what Lenin had called "bribes" for the "upper strata of the proletariat". These favors to American workers, extended through the development of the modern credit system of consumption, provided an increasing distance between their condition and the conditions of workers in the Third World. To these latter workers passed the initiative for the struggles which would negate the process of corruption and unloose domestic class struggles in full form; toward these Third World struggles, the American Left had no serious orientation and found itself bankrupt in one more key respect.

14

The disintegration of the Left was only superficially of recent origins. While the revolutionary forces had advanced, so those of the counter-revolution had advanced also outside and within the revolutionary camp. Each International, while representing at its inception a more advanced stage, was resolved in a progressively reactionary manner. While the First dissolved, the Second turned toward War-Patriotism and the Third to internal subversion of the Revolution by the professional revolutionaries. In truth, this represented no "revisionism" but only the historic realization of the obstacles confronting world proletarian revolution. After the optimistic mythology of the Nineteenth Century, white, male labor-socialist movement had come the shattering revelation that all the world would move sharply toward transformation, or no part would succeed. In retreating, the Western proletariat inevitably developed from within its own ranks agencies of stabilization and stultification — whether Communist Party bureaucracy in Europe, Labour Party in Britain, or union bureaucracy in America — dependent upon the continuation of a modified, "welfare" class society. To move forward again, the proletariat would have to stand for itself, essentially unrepresented by any formalized vanguard, in the bursting of the new chrysalis which surrounded its efforts.

15

The relative success of the bourgeois economic order and the complexities of intra-class alignments have permitted American Marxism no natural history. Rather, as a doctrine it has existed in a series of sporadic attempts by intellectuals to appropriate Marxist methodology and of ideological parties to

justify their pathetically unworthy claims to inheritance of the body of thought and practice. For Socialists, Marxism had been a simple faith: a reassurance of Capital's greedy nature and inevitable downfall, to be replaced in leadership by some representation of the proletariat. For Communists Marxism was more complex, an internal knowledge which those outside the Party's upper ranks could not possess fully. While the proletariat moved forward, however, no greater numbers joined Left parties. Thus Marxism, born of Marx's conceptions of working class self-development, became in the view of the Marxists increasingly an understanding external to the working class and over it.

16

For American intellectuals as a group, Marxism was even less. The "market-place view of reality" (Williams) reflecting a confidence in bourgeois social relations, permeated thought as nowhere else in the modern intelligentsia. Separated from the clarity of continuous class development toward Socialism, rebellious intellectuals like Charles Beard retained a Jeffersonian framework of understanding, while the bulk of the intellectual community and its mentor Dewey moved toward increasing forms of prediction and social control, mistakenly considered "progressive" or even "radical".

17

Lacking a stable Party or trade-union bureaucracy, or (until recently) a place for Marxists of the Chair, American radicalism was spared the cretinoid intellectuals of Europe (such as Kautsky, Pollitt, and Althusser) who borrowed Marxism from Germany or Russia and set out to preserve it as an undertaker preserves a corpse. At the same time, Americans of

all classes were denied access to even the most common conceptions of Marxist method.

18

Marxist thought in the United States — as a concentrated form of Marxism's ills everywhere — has most of all lacked a critique of culture as the substance of social life, the mediation of understanding and response from classes toward the outside world. If one could believe the self-avowed Left interpreters of the American proletariat, it lived on the job alone or vaporized at home between meager paychecks. Women and children existed less for these observers than for bourgeois society, which drew the lessons of women's subjection early in the century and began to provide a specialized function of socialization and reproduction, mediated through consumption. Similarly, the only vibrant indigenous culture in the United States — that of the blacks — was ignored or rejected by the Left until the Communist movement seized upon and deified its most assimilationist and non-revolutionary aspects.

19

Yet while the Left contemplated life through its economistic lenses, the social relations of the working class bore an increasingly vital relation to its revolutionary potentialities. From a modern work force, an entire world-view must evolve for it to fight effectively against the cultural and physical power of the advanced bourgeois forces. Capitalism creates this world-view through its invasion of the community (and, at last, the individual home) with market relations of the factory. The shared aspects of the scattered cultural experiences in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries were accented and developed in the United States through market mechanisms (reinforced by social mechanisms such as enforced public education) creating a mass culture such as the world had never seen before.

20

In one sense, Mass Culture embodies the deepest creative force, the unification of a class through common participation in the forms of cultural self-understanding and technical development. (Chaplin's Little Tramp suggests the former; the development of early housework devices suggests the latter.) In another sense, Mass Culture was an opiate that religion could not be for the Twentieth Century: at once a source of relaxation and forgetfulness from the alienating, brutalizing labor of work and the chaotic life of urban society, and a definition of personal and group progress through individualistic accumulation. At its birth around the turn of the century, Mass Culture seemed to promise a total revolutionary experience, shared through the best representation of the masses' lives. In the generations to follow, this Mass Culture was increasingly rationalized as a means for commodity sales and as a weapon against the cultural development of the masses. Despite this general appropriation, however, the tension remained — from the Marx Brothers to Donald Duck — essentially unresolved, pushed further into antagonism by the advance of productive forces and their social reflections.

21

The inner decay of purposelessness and drift — so clear to European Marxists in their own societies of the 1920s — was for the first time the dominant American reality in the 1950s. In reaching the outermost limits of its social and cultural hegemony, the bourgeoisie naively sought to project its future in-

definitely upon the current basis in a population increasingly stripped of traditional protections of alienations (ethnic groups, extended family, older class and neighborhood institutions). Yet the pinnacle of Mass Culture under bourgeois hegemony was also the moment of its decline, since Monopoly Capitalism's Ideal World of the joyfully consuming nuclear family was the ultimate objectification of social life, the empty vessel of alienation for all its members. Thus the vast replication of false images (commodities) could not overcome the undermining of the social system through the self-alienation of its members. The growing antagonism between the increase in the forms of reification and their undermining, Lukacs had noted as early as 1921, was a "key signature to the decline of the bourgeois society". The resurfacing of repressed cultural energy — even in those forms, such as early rock'n'roll, which were essentially archaic expressions of male assertion and dominance — increasingly moved toward that point of conflict in 1950s-1960s America.

22

The open fissures in the Imperial "common interest" were in the first instance universally related to the black population and the gathering crisis in the cities. If the first three decades of the century had marked the metropolitanization of whites and the elaboration of American urban civilization at its peak, the next three decades saw the invasion and partial conquest of these centers of civilization by a people who appeared (to Capitalists and white working-class families alike) as "invaders", disrupters of achievement. In reality, the confinement of blacks to the rural South for a half-century after the Civil War only displaced and delayed the return of massive social contradiction.

For Marx, the City's domination of the countryside

was one of the bourgeoisie's greatest and most progressive social tasks: only that domination could conquer the "isolation and separation" experienced by the rural peasantry. The creation of an urbanized laboring population posed at first a danger, met with the architectural recreation of isolation through the family cells. In the white working-class neighborhoods of the 1920s-1940s, this isolation was maintained among ethnic groups but mitigated within by the extended family and a general ethnic camaraderie. With the retreat of working-class struggle after World War II, white workers were increasingly reisolated by the deterioration of city neighborhoods and the ultimate expansion and isolation in suburbanization. This was an illusory victory for Capital, however. In consuming the countryside, the City began to consume itself, to gut the inner contents of American civilization as it had been known in the Twentieth Century. The intrusion of blacks denoted the City's demise, and the birth of new black cities socially, culturally, politically, and economically dispossessed and disenchanted from all authority. Long recognized as a standing threat to Imperial civilization, by the early 1960s that threat was no longer merely potential.

23

The rise of student struggles in the 1960s building from and expanding on the sectoral dissidence of blacks reflected the emptiness of contemporary life for the heirs apparent to the bureaucratization of society. As blacks expressed in the streets of Harlem and Watts that no leadership of "representation" could ultimately meet their desires, so students in the institutions notoriously the quintessence of bureaucracy revealed in their growing hostility demands for direct participation in university and civil life. In tying black support struggles to student aspirations,

Berkeley pointed the way for a vast international Moment of renewed battles. For the first time, American society revealed itself in advance of Europe in the enormity of decay and in the creation of new forms of revolutionary activity.

24

The New Left in the United States showed itself to be the second Moment of American Marxism, in its apparent contradiction and implied resolution of the first Moment. The struggles of unorganized workers in the first period (1910-20) and of students lay upon opposite sides of the Imperial apex, and reflected their understanding accordingly. If downtrodden immigrants battled for subsistence, students resolutely condemned the price at which abundance was to be obtained, if workers' understanding had in that period been merely particular, limited to the nature and function of work, students' understanding was abstractly universal, limited to an outline of the Empire's functioning; if, finally, workers could as a mass fight only an economistic battle, students could approach no less than a total struggle which failed to comprehend the economic basis of itself and its potential allies. Purified in its isolation, the New Left's class struggle was a revolt of trainee technicians against their trainers and administrators, an impossible struggle which, however, in its generalized critique of bureaucratism, opened the way for its own supersession.

25

The cycle of the political New Left reveals a lengthy history, compressed into a momentary surge and dispersion. Marvelously naive, it became ruthlessly cynical, unconsciously aware of cultural disintegration, it finally joined the representation of that

disintegration (which, it wrongly believed, was its overcoming) in Youth Culture; visionarily democratic, it formed personalities and cults with a speed never surpassed by Marxist political movements. The pace of the New Left revealed not, however, the innate incapacities of the youthful revolutionaries, but the impatience of revolutionary content toward outward forms in the last phase of worldwide class struggle.

26

The New Left experienced only a conscious glimpse of Marxism, but that was most instructive. Reacting against formal deification of the industrial proletariat, its most advanced spokesmen offered a theory (the "New Working Class") which attributed special revolutionary characteristics to the technicians; unable to view Socialism as the end of political society, it held revolution to be no more than the accomplishment of infinite politics ("Organizing") mediated through and justified by ultra-democratic politicians, agitators lacking even the roots in the communities that old Socialist and Communist cadres had had. Unable to unite into its own view the wholeness of the revolutionary process in the growing competence and audacity of the variegated working class, the New Left lapsed into pure rage and irresponsibility (Weatherman), formalized Stalinism (PL and BARU) and at last melancholy. Yet through the militancy of its followers, the New Left established a new stage of mass intervention against Imperialist military action abroad; and through the insistent connection of personal and social liberation, it brought a new consciousness of totality — however distorted in practice — into the revolutionary process.

27

Whereas the appearance of an overtly revolutionary black metropolitan movement in 1968-69 challenged the New Left's relevance to existing domestic oppression, the appearance of a women's movement marked its definitive end. The quest for personal self-liberation, the New Left's keynote, was now most of all exemplified in the lives of politically active women; and against the reality of women's oppression by the Movement itself, its members could only attempt to achieve an impossible self-transformation, dissolve, or repudiate their entire past. Yet, too, the women's movement as a movement united into itself the dynamics of New Left organization and found the living activity of millions of ordinary and non-political women far vaster than their supposed political representation in groups and agitational forms.

28

At the same time, the new level of women's disaffection symptomized the moribund state of bourgeois culture. If the prime ethic of early Capitalism had been hard work and savings, its inevitable social comcomitant ethic was repression of all pleasure for pleasure's sake through the enforcement of stricter formal and informal codes; the recovery of sexuality for the sake of production (most notably, through advertising) denoted the second stage of bourgeois cultural development; and the revolt against alienated "pleasure" and for human content in sexuality heralds the final liberation from repression.

29

With the appearance of automation from the mid-1950s and the beginning of cybernation a half-decade later, the relations of production in class society

meet their outermost limits. Automation, the linking of automatic machines for the production of a finished or semi-finished product, marks negation of working relations in skilled labor before the advent of mass production; at one historical end, the machine is merely an extension of the man's mind and hands; at the other, the worker is no more than an extension of the machine's mechanisms and programmed inclinations. Cybernation completes the progression through computerization, and thus reveals the developments as a new stage of production: while the creation of mass production bridged the gap between archaic and modern production with huge numbers of relatively unproductive workers, and the introduction of the production line and time-and-motion studies in the 1920s and 1930s was the ultimate development in a time of expanding, relatively more productive manpower, the arrival of automation and cybernation is the maximal form of productivity in the period of relatively shrinking manpower. Each development, the product of dead labor (the work of generations of mental and manual workers in improving production), impoverished the lives of workers as workers (despite the relative counter-acting force of union organization) according to Marx's formula: The more workers produce, the less they themselves become.

30

Yet the increasing revolt against alienated relations, groping toward greater levels of self-organization, denotes the first phase of Capitalism's final stage.

In response to the mass production at the time of the First Moment, workers instinctively threw up mass strikes for decent, human conditions. Against the intensification of production and the establishment of totalitarian relations in the factories, workers demanded also the negotiability of the conditions of

production. Against the final mutilation of the worker that is represented by automation and cybernation, workers began to respond by movements against the nature of production itself. The threat to the very tolerability of work posed by automation was first met, in the 1950s, by a strike against management and unions alike: the wildcat. From these beginning local, guerrilla actions, there can be only one logical conclusion: the birth of workers' councils aimed at appropriation of production into the hands of the producers.

31

Meanwhile, the changes in the composition of the working class create an increasingly hostile force, developed through struggles which are in form sectoral, but in content demands for the entire class. Young workers in production have already become notorious in their intolerance of "discipline" (from the bosses' point of view). Meanwhile, a newly proletarianized sector of college-trained workers increasingly voices its desire to shift the direction of production toward social, human ends — or to abandon it entirely. The increase of women workers to over twenty million, especially in white-collar occupations, establishes a mighty force which — individually vocal or otherwise — proves in its demands the universality of the proletariat from the factory floors to the offices and the thoroughgoing cultural implications of class struggle. The crucial development of black sectors at the very heart of production provides Capitalism with its most immediate fear, and with good reason: the struggles of blacks, more than any other sectoral struggle, have demonstrated the archaicism of unions and all devices short of revolutionary transformation to provide the necessary changes.

To note these is not to deny intra-sectoral hostili-

ties which pose obstacles toward united effort; but it is to suggest that more and more, those forces with the perceptions of having least to gain socially and culturally from Capitalism's continuance find themselves increasingly at the center of production. In the strike wave of our period — unknown in its dimensions since 1946 — the efforts by industrial workers to maintain living conditions were joined by a vast white-collar striving to gain the simple decency and implied power that new unionization or strengthened unionization would mean. At last, this seemingly economistic struggle poses already the turning of quantity into quality, for the unsatisfied demands of those long at work are joined to those newer forces of sectoral power — Youth, women, and Third World — which demand the supersession of the relations of production themselves.

32

To make these claims is not to announce the imminence of revolution nor the certainty of its development at any stage; rather, it is to express the necessary and inevitable qualities which lie along the path toward transformation. The challenge for a declining bourgeoisie to the working class is unprecedented: it seeks to destroy the relation between living costs and wages entirely; and thereby to set back the relative advance of the working class to pre-unionization levels. The demands of the working class are equally unprecedented: minimally, a new level of financial expectation based on the real exchange value of their products; and maximally, a refusal to accept the further degradation of the conditions of production.

33

The Socialism of the working class is not an end in itself but only the means taken to reorganize the pro-

duction of life's necessities (including work itself); the fruit of Socialism is the potentiality released by that reorganization. Thus Socialism is not a goal moved toward but an increasingly present socialization of response and felt attitude of confidence and solidarity. Unity may no longer be deceptively achieved through the suppression of racial and sexual tendencies: success lies only through a redefinition of race and sexuality through the parameters of struggle. In full force, the working class represents those forces throughout the world which in seeking identity have necessarily sought the transformation of all society and of themselves. Thus what the French forces of May-June, 1968 proclaimed abstractly ("All power to the Imagination"), American conditions demand concretely of all militants: far more than the reorganization of production, the reorganization of all that society has meant.

34

The social life within the United States poses difficult but not insurmountable obstacles to the victory of its truly productive forces. Historically, Americans have been surrounded by a hitherto unknown social plenty and personal liberty, and have naturally felt exempt from the cruel fate of mankind. Uniquely free in practical life, their theoretical conceptions of self have been naive and obsessive, insistent upon the realization of society's possibilities without the mass transformation of class struggle. As the youngest people of the industrialized West, their obstacles appeared naturally overcome through encroachments upon Nature through the development of mass society armed with agricultural and industrial skills. Only in the Twentieth Century do those skills, under the control of Monopoly Capital, turn upon themselves to undermine the achievements of all American Civili-

zation and render them into their opposite: a standing threat to the future of the world's population.

In the Twentieth Century, Americans find themselves in the technologically oldest culture of the world, and before its fragmentation in the 1960s perhaps the most totalitarian in everyday life. Devoted increasingly to surplus production in maintaining the irrationality of Capitalist social relations, modern leaders of American society have willingly created a surplus population all but forced toward crime and degradation in search for economic decency and self-definition. In attempting to forestall revolutionary struggle, these leaders seek the self-fulfilled prophecy of a surplus population becoming sub-human in the eyes of the alienated but "functioning" working population. Alas for such plans, humanity's vision of a promiseful future is asserted eloquently behind the thickest prison walls.

35

Philosophy begins, Hegel tells us, when "a race for the most part has left its concrete life, when separation and change of class have begun, and the people approach toward their fall, when a gulf has arisen between inward strivings and external reality, and the old forms of Religion, etcetera, are no longer satisfying." The birth of true wisdom of Americans about their society — and consequently, about themselves — begins only when the Empire's decline is a foregone certainty: only through that fall as an Imperial People do Americans rejoin the upward struggles of humanity.

36

Marxism in the United States, therefore, only now draws its first breath as a thoroughgoing system of thought. Vast groundwork in the comprehension of

method and the application to classes remains to be laid. Yet we may specify in a general sense the tasks ahead:

First, Marxism must illuminate the internal reorganization which flows objectively from progressive development of the means of production and points objectively (through the growth of revolutionary struggle) toward the accomplishment of a new society. This remains the central task of class analysis.

Second, Marxism must discover the practical basis in all modern life for the participation of masses of people in the transformation of culture. This revealed social nature of "personal" experience, and the reshaping of mass experience by the transformation of the individual toward a realization of potential full humanity, is what Marx understood to be mankind's achievement of its species being. This is, indeed, the last major task of social theory, the comprehension of the historical process which ends in the appearance of true freedom and self-realization. Only with this comprehension, and the concrete negation of the character of life in class society, can the bonds be snapped and humanity released — as Surrealism has understood — toward an apocalyptic future.

37

The problems of Marxism are the problems of our lives: the movement toward resolution of antimonies, "personal" and "social", through self-conscious activity. Work, thought (intellectuality), and the pursuit of Culture will not be dissolved by Socialism: they are already undergoing dissolution. Work becomes play, thought activity, Culture the meaning of all existence past and present. These are the realities that a whole society moves toward, whatever adulterated forms it first reaches. Through changes in our lives, we may view the new world; through operation

of society as a whole, we may view the reorganization of daily life.

38

While the abstract terms of the Questions of Organization — the relationship between spontaneity and organization — remain constant in revolutionary theory, the concrete resolution is unique for each new period. True to Lenin's understanding, the activity of the masses is basic in creating new forms of social transformation; the activity of the Party, or group, lies in understanding and properly aiding the self-realization of these new forms.

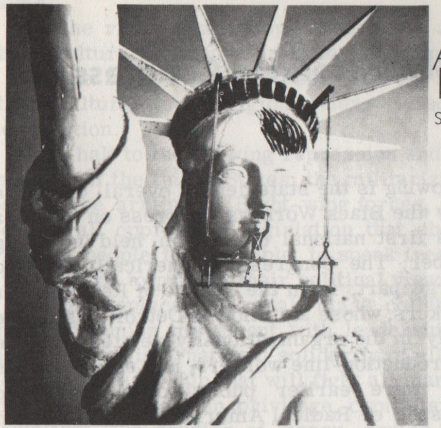
Socialists, Communists, and other politicized activists in the United States have generally considered the self-activity of the masses secondary to political control over the revolutionary process, and yet themselves have remained subject to the laws of self-organization. While mass organizations grow in militancy, radicals rise to power or influence; but when militancy declines, radicals are isolated and driven to political compromise of their principles or to persecution and political ineffectuality. The sectarian political faiths — so essential to the radicals as individuals — have in general proven less important than the skills and contacts gained by training in any mass oriented, Left organization. More than anywhere else, the political expression of revolutionary fervor has remained an afterthought to militant workers and a temporary, less-than-lifetime activity of the bulk of "professional revolutionists".

Over the last half-century, the particular determinations of the Second and Third Internationals have alike shown themselves unequal to the new problems of mass society; nowhere has this been as apparent as in the United States, where political radicals remained a miniscule minority able to express influence over masses only indirectly. Now, in the midst

of converging revolutionary possibilities, we see the necessity for a leap as great as Lenin's leap, toward a "new kind" of political formation. This formation will in fact propose not only the last (before the revolution) but also the first mode appropriate to the fully developed revolutionary forces in modern (and consequently, in American) society.

39

The Marxism of the past may easily be distinguished from ours, for it unconsciously proclaims struggle toward parts of the new existence at the expense of achievement of the whole: the supposed fulfillment of class liberation against the no less universal liberation of race and sexuality; the supposed fulfillment of race and sexual liberation through another mediation than class struggle. Against the Marxists of the Past we insist that new forms of self-organization, undreamed of by them, will follow, that humanity can recover its self in History, and that the process is underway without their help, or it has already been lost.



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Over 30, under siege & left of center stage

Black Workers Congress

The following is the statement of overall objectives adopted by the Black Workers Congress on the occasion of its first national convention, held in Chicago in September. The Congress is generically descendant, in large part, from the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, whose agitation in Detroit has figured prominently in the organizationally-related struggles of black production-line workers, and some of whose documents were earlier published in the "Black Worker" issue of Radical America (Volume 5, Number 2). The Black Workers Congress document underlines the interdependence of Third World liberation and the achievement of a socialist society. The Congress's headquarters is at 8824 Fenkell, Detroit, Michigan 48238.

Our Objectives

(1) Workers' control of their places of work — the factories, mines, fields, offices, transportation services and communication facilities — so that the exploitation of labor will cease and no person or corporation will get rich off the labor of another person, but all people will work for the collective benefit of humanity.

(2) An elimination of all forms of racism and the right of self-determination for African people, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Asians, and Indians who live in the United States and Puerto Rico.

(3) The elimination of all forms of oppression of

women in all phases of society, on the job and in the home.

(4) The right of all people to express and develop their cultural heritage throughout the United States.

(5) The right of all people to express and develop their cultural and religious views without fear of persecution.

(6) A halt to the growing repression and increasing fascism of the United States, the militarization of the police, the arming of Right-wing forces, and the repeal of all oppressive legislation that abolishes the right of people to assemble, to speak freely, to have privacy, and to publish their political views.

(7) The replacement of all class collaborators in the trade-union movement with leadership that will fight for the international solidarity of all oppressed people, a leadership that will fight all manifestations of racism, white-skin privilege, capitalism, and imperialism (the sending of money, armed forces, and Christian missionaries from one country to another for the purpose of exploiting and oppressing its workers). This leadership must demand real equality for women in employment.

(8) The creation in the labor movement of revolutionary black caucuses, Chicano and Puerto Rican revolutionary caucuses, Third World labor alliances, independent revolutionary union movements and other forms of revolutionary labor association that will seek to break the stranglehold of the reactionary labor bureaucrats and the capitalistic class collaborators that help to prevent the working-class people from understanding their historic role in controlling the means of production.

(9) A twenty-four hour work week where all the people of the United States will be employed and have the necessary funds for food, clothing, shelter, and the right to improve their standard of living and enjoy the benefits of an industrialized society.

(10) Thirty days of paid vacation time each year for all workers including women in the home and the use of all resort areas and the creation of new ones for working-class people and the elimination of special privileges at resort areas for any group of people.

(11) An elimination of speed-up, compulsory overtime, unsafe working conditions, inadequate medical facilities on the job, brutality and terror in the mines, factories, and industrial plants of the United States and Puerto Rico.

(12) That all people in the United States engage in productive work for the benefit of all the people in the world. Parasitic capitalistic vultures must be eliminated and all people who are outside of the work force must have jobs so that there will be no need for prostitution, pimps, dope pushers and addicts, gamblers, hustlers, winos — all creatures of the capitalistic system.

(13) An elimination of the trash and violence perpetuated on the mass media and the right of all people to use the radio and television networks to express and develop their cultural forms.

(14) An end to the pollution of the atmosphere, forests, trees, rivers, and living quarters of all the people by the giant corporations who have no regard for the people and whose owners can fly away to islands in the Caribbean to avoid pollution or jet-set to Latin America and Africa, parts of Asia, and other areas.

(15) Adequate free public-health facilities in all communities; adequate free hospitals, free doctor's care, and improved working conditions for nurses and hospital aides.

(16) Sufficient free twenty-four-hour day-care centers in all communities so that mothers and fathers will be able to engage in other work and activities and the care of children will be socialized and their education will train them to work for humanity

and not for their selfish, individual aspirations.

(17) Free education from pre-school through all levels of college and university training and control of the educational facilities by the people.

(18) Safe, clean, uncrowded housing where there are no rats and roaches, crumbling walls, falling ceilings, and garbage piled up from insufficient public garbage disposal.

(19) Abolition of the brutal penal system of the United States and the establishment of people's reorientation centers for those who misunderstand the workers' society and commit crimes against the people.

(20) The immediate release of all prisoners from the archaic jail system of the United States, many of whom are political prisoners in the traditional sense of the word, but all of whom are there because of the unjust historical development and practices of a capitalistic society.

(21) A withdrawal of all United States troops from overseas countries and a total dismantling of the military force of the United States.

(22) Elimination and smashing of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency, the counter-insurgency forces and research activities that have terrorized the population of the United States and the people of the world.

(23) A destruction of all the armed, vicious, brutal militaristic police forces in the United States that kill people at random, terrorize the population, and the establishment of a people's militia. There will be no need for an armed police force and military personnel, FBI or CIA, with workers control of the means of production, transport services and communication facilities.

(24) Reparations from the United States government and all white racist institutions in the United States. We further demand that the United States government pay reparations to the people of Africa,

Latin America, and Asia whom it has exploited for centuries.

(25) The withdrawal of all United States investment in South Africa.

(26) The immediate ending of the aggressive war in Indo-China.

(27) The right of the Palestinian people to their homeland in the Middle East.

(28) The ending of the exploitation of workers in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean by Western powers such as the US, France, England, Portugal, Belgium, Israel.

(29) The ending of the trade blockade of Cuba.

(30) The admission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations and the control of Formosa by the Chinese government of the mainland.

(31) A rational planning of a world economic system that will eliminate racism, wars, hunger, disease, lack of housing, oppression of women, class antagonisms, and big-nation chauvinism.

(32) The creation of a genuine revolutionary workers party in the United States under the leadership of Third World workers, men and women, employed and unemployed, who will be guided by the accumulated wisdom of all revolutionary thinkers, and who will work untiringly to implement the objectives of the International Black Workers Congress.

We Urge

(1) The systematic study of revolutionary theory and the experiences of revolutionary movements and socialist nations so that we might learn from them, but in our learning we must at all times remember that we must apply all theory to the concrete realities of the United States. We live in the most industrialized nation of the world, a country that oppresses the majority of the people of the world. Any revolutionary theory that we cannot apply, cannot adjust to

our concrete realities, will not be of much value, but all revolutionary theory in some form can be modified, extended, applied, interpreted to fit the needs of the revolutionary forces in the United States.

(2) Creative discussion in a non-antagonistic manner about the future of the world in which we want to live and the methods to achieve these objectives. People's leisure time should be spent in discussing, reading, and working for the new world. Above all we must try to build the new world in order to learn how to build it.

(3) A systematic attack on all the control mechanisms of United States society. Our efforts will never be successful if we do not engage in practical, day-to-day struggle against all the controls that the capitalists have erected to maintain their rule. The concept of citizenship in the United States, the educational system, the mass media, the dogma and practices of the Christian church, the welfare system, the courts and the administration of justice, the profit motive system and upward mobility, the love of life and fear of death, the lack of job security, inadequate payment of wages and consumer credit, the practices of the reactionary trade union leadership, the denial of adequate health and medical facilities, dope in our communities, the downgrading and denial of the cultural heritage of Third World people, the poverty program and other counter-insurgency forms, the thievery of the land of Third World people.

All these and other forms of control must be systematically attacked, and the greater the unity in the attack, the greater the results and the quickening of the revolutionary process, for only when there is conflict against the control mechanisms of the society will there be change, and only the movement for change can produce revolutionary ferment and results.

(4) The uniting of all Third World revolutionary forces. Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, black people, Indians, and Asians have too long been divided from each other, and the exploiters have benefited from our disunity. We have all lived under the yoke of racism and economic exploitation. We have all suffered at the hands of the white imperialist powers and we have seen our native lands devastated, raped, and pillaged, our mothers and sisters brutalized, our fathers cringe from the white master's whip lash. The forces that oppress us are our major contradictions. Between us there are antagonisms, but these must be resolved through discussion and we must unite as one mighty force in this racist land called the United States of America and help to build a new world without racism, hunger, disease, exploitation in all forms, a world of sisters and brothers.

We Pledge

(1) To keep our revolutionary commitment under all the harsh forms that repression and mounting fascism will take in the United States.

(2) To work untiringly to fulfill our objectives.

(3) To help create a world where all people will call each other sisters and brothers out of genuine love of each other.

ATTICA

Most of the brothers
were prisoners before they came
survivors
of a war with no victors
and many deaths.

They hurt themselves
and those who loved them
trying to be men
and
failing

But there, with the cold ring of steel
and the loneliness,
the clouds began to lift
the pain made sense
and the mad visions sort themselves out
into dreams of rekindled life.

A thousand men,
who had fought alone all their lives
linked arms
invited death to chase the demons
and found a freedom
their captors never knew.

Mark Naison